

The Problem of Evil in the Thoughts of Swinburne and John Hick

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Abstract

The issue of evil is one of the most important philosophical and theological issues that has always been debated by various thinkers over the centuries. Swinburne and John Hick are Christian thinkers who have tried to explain the evil problem in the light of the Christian and philosophical teachings of the West. According to Swinburne, evil is the absence of perfection and goodness in an object and is realized in a minimal sense in the world of creation. John Hick also considers evil a necessity of the good world and has defined it as an example. The importance of the issue of evil and its study in the intellectual system of Swinburne and John Hick as contemporary philosophers of Christianity and expressing their similarities and differences in explaining the solution of the problem of evil despite the doctrinal and intellectual similarity is something that can help us with their explanations about familiarize the villain problem solver. In this article, by using descriptive-analytical method and using reliable sources and necessary analyzes, Swinburne and John Hick's thoughts about the nature of evil, types of evil, solutions to its problem and their answers to this problem were examined. Swinburne and Hick do not see the existence of evil in contradiction with the divine existence and the adherent of His attributes, and they believe that many good deeds can be achieved in the presence of evil.

Key Words: *Evil, Swinburne, Divine justice, John Hick, Soul Development , God*

1.Introduction

Man has long been faced with the question of who really created the evil? What is the purpose of the existence of the evil? Could not this world continue without the existence of the evil? What are the benefits of the evil for man and the universe? Questions have always occupied the human mind and have led to debate and reflection.

In ancient Greek philosophy, philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, and Xenon pioneered the discussion of evil, but the oldest sources that refer to evil and its role in the universe should be considered Rig Veda in Hinduism and Avesta in Zoroastrianism. On the other hand, in the Testaments and verses of the Holy Quran, there are references to the evil issue.

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According to Swinburne, God is absolute good and evil is not issued from him, and the root of evil must be sought somewhere outside the divine will, and the creation of evil cannot be attributed to him. John Hick also believes that evil is necessary. They are for the attainment of charity, the most important good of which is the exaltation and cultivation of the soul, and by cultivating the soul, we have in fact obtained divine pleasure, because the human soul is the supreme creature of the Creator.

Examining and comparing the thoughts of Swinburne and John Hick is also a necessity of time, because although the issue of evil is an old issue in philosophy and theology, it has always been subject to doubts to deny the existence of God, which is one of the examples today. We can refer to the views of JL Mackey and William. Therefore, familiarity with the thoughts and statements of Swinburne and Hick in their biased and logical defense of the existence of God is something that can acquaint us with their solutions to solve the problem of evil.

So far, no research has been written that examines and compares the thoughts of Swinburne and John Hick on the issue of evil, and this is the first work that comprehensively examines and compares the thoughts of these two Christian thinkers about evil. Articles such as "Critique of Swinburne's Theological Theory of Divine Justice in the Problem of Evil, by Tavakol Koohi" or "Davis' Critique of John Hick's Theology of Soul Development" by Akram Khalili, independently examine the issue of evil in the intellectual system of Swinburne and Hick is discussed, which is mostly critical and is outside the scope of this research. The initiative of this research is in the first place to study and compare the thoughts of Swinburne and John Hick and then to examine the nature, types and solutions to the problem of evil in the minds of these two philosophers, which has not been addressed in previous works. We will try with authentic sources and analytical capacities to answer these questions;

Why are there evils? What is the definition of evil by Swinburne and Hick? Is evil existential or non-existent? Can evils violate the good system of the universe? Can the issue of evil deny the existence of God or at least restrict His attributes? What kind of evils have Swinburne and Hick expressed? What solutions have been proposed by Swinburne and Hick to solve the evil problem? Who or what sources have inspired Swinburne and Hick to solve the evil problem? What are the similarities and differences between the ideas of Swinburne and John Hick in order to solve the evil problem? Is there a solution to the evil problem of the universe?

2.The Nature of Evil

1-2 Swinburne: According to Swinburne, the existence of evil is a necessary thing for a good system, and without the existence of evil, there will be no good system, and evil is necessary for the existence of this world.

Swinburne says: "Henceforth, when I speak of the actions of the perpetrators and their characteristics, and when I speak of the state of affairs in general, I put the good versus the bad. I use the state of affairs in its causal sense, that is, the events that happen to people, as well as their intentional actions. Sufferings and other afflictions and situations are bad, and it does not seem right to call them evil, even if the factor that caused it happen has been committed. Although the issue we are dealing with here is called the "problem of evil", it is in fact a matter of bad situations, as it is not permissible for a factor that can prevent them from occurring."³

Swinburne does not accept the non-existence of evil and believes that evil is the absence of a state of abundant goodness, the removal of which makes it possible for charities to exist. In fact, the absence of good in the existence and essence of any object can be an excuse for its evil. On the other hand, Swinburne considers any factor that prevents a person from achieving good to be evil because it also hinders the lack of goodness and the acquisition of goodness.⁴

According to Swinburne, suffering and other false traits and desires are simply due to the lack of some kind of goodness; But pain is not just a lack of pleasure and evil deeds, it is not just a lack of good deeds, and the world can be depicted without suffering and evil. This is why his view of the nature of evil is at odds with its non-existence. Swinburne says that the problem of evil is not a problem that is related to the lack of many good states, and that a large number of evils are positive because of the bad state, and that God can eliminate them if God wills.

Swinburne believes that we should consider the good and bad of deeds in the case of the God of the universe in relation to the consequences of those deeds, because a phenomenon or thing may seem evil to us, but its essence is all good, and we be unaware of it. Therefore, we should not look at things with a superficial look, and perhaps the things that we consider evil are all good and blessed for us, and this is the result of an action or that phenomenon that determines being good and evil. So God, who is absolute good, He always gives good to his servants and protects them from evil.

³. Swinburne, Richard (1998) *Providence and the problem of Evil* (Clarendon Press, Oxford University) p.3

⁴. HosseiniEskandian Abdullah, Rajabnejhadian Masoumeh (2020), *Evil Thought and its Approach with an Emphasis on Swinburne's Theodicy of Divine Justice*, *Meta fizika Journal*, 4(12), p.112

Swinburne says that likewise, in the case of God, who is omnipotent, absolute goodness cannot be defined in this way, for He often has an infinite range of actions at His disposal, and from whomever He chooses, one can still do better than He imagined his power. By the same token, any world full of intelligent creatures created by him is still conceivable that he can create a better world. In this case, nothing positive can be said about what an absolute good God can do.

Swinburne believes that God, because he is the absolute good, always receives good from him and cannot be considered the source of evil, and says that I accept that the omnipotent being can prevent the occurrence of any bad state in terms of reasonable refusal may prevent it. But I do not accept that a being who is pure good should choose the same. A being who is pure good, if he allows a bad state to occur, should have the right to allow that bad state to occur.⁵ He also says that God cannot accomplish many good things in the absence of bad things. The most obvious example of this rational restraint that God is responsible for is that God cannot give us free will, which means that we can choose between good and evil, without the natural possibility of doing evil.

The fact that human beings have the ability to create important evils is a logical consequence of the fact that they have a free and responsible choice; even God cannot give us this choice without the possibility of obtaining evil.⁶

Swinburne believes that the impossible is beyond the power of God, and that God, who is omnipotent, cannot do two impossible things, and that he is also unable to accomplish. It is also that it is not able to achieve, for example, two incompatible good things at the same time so that people can benefit from it. Swinburne says that it is logically impossible for God to create good by any morally permissible means other than allowing evil to be accomplished. For example, it is logically impossible for God to give us the free will to choose between good and evil, and at the same time to cause that we choose the good and it is logically impossible for God to achieve our good with such a free will, without the evil of a bad choice being realized.⁷

Swinburne considers the creation of impossible things to be outside the power of God, and by the same token believes that God is not the creator of evil, and that it is man who, by abusing

⁵ Swinburne, 1996, 30, Swinburne, Richard (1996) Some Major of Theodicy in Daniel Howard (ed), The Evidential Argument from Evil, Indiana University Press

⁶ ibid, 2002, 158, Swinburne, Richard (2002) Is There a God? Translated by Mohammad Javadan, Qom, Mofid University Press

⁷ Swinburne, Richard (2008) The issue of evil, translated by Mahmoud Yousef Thani, Book of the Month of Religion, No. 135

his free will, causes evil. And the things that we consider evil and attribute to God are inherently harmless and all good.

2-2. John Hick: Hick believes that for many people, more than anything else, it is this horrible depth and breadth of human suffering, along with the selfishness and greed of mankind, as a great part of it that makes the idea of a kind creator unacceptable, and they lean towards one of the many naturalistic theories about religion. Instead of trying to define evil on the basis of a theological theory, it is better to define it without controversy and veiling, that is, by showing what the word implies. Evil is physical suffering, spiritual pain, and so on. It refers to moral evil. Moral evil is one of the two causes of the first evil, because a large part of human suffering is caused by the cruelty of the human race. This suffering includes great calamities such as poverty, oppression and persecution, war and all kinds of injustice, humiliation and insults and injustices that occur in human societies. (Hick, 2010, 100)⁸

Hick says that instead of trying to define evil based on the type of theological theory, for example, as something that is contrary to God's will, it is better to define it without veiling, that is, by showing what these words mean. Evil means suffering, physical pain, mental pain and moral evil. (Hick, 1989, 89)⁹ He also says that the word evil, if used in a comprehensive sense, can be distinguished in two ways:

1. Moral evil caused by human evil
2. Immoral or natural evil such as disease and natural disasters.

Moral evil is created by human beings, cruel, unjust, vicious and misguided thoughts and actions, or in other words, moral evil refers to those evils in which the human factor has a direct role in its emergence. Natural evil arises independently of human actions: disease, flood, earthquake, storm, drought, tornado, etc. (Hick, 2007, 265)¹⁰ Hick defines an example of evil and says that instead of trying to define evil on the basis of some kind of theological theory, it is better to define it without controversy, that is, by showing what the word implies. Evil refers to physical and mental suffering and moral evil (Hick, 1990, 39)¹¹

John Hick, in his view of what he describes as "an approach based on the cultivation of the soul against evil," emphasizes the need for independent growth for man through evil. John Hick believes that human life can not continue without evil, and that perfection can only

⁸. Hick, John(2010)Evil and the God of Love, New York, Palgrave Macmillan

⁹. Hick, John(1989)An Interpretation of Religion, London, Macmillan

¹⁰. Hick, John(2007)Philips on God and Evil, Religious Studies, Cambridge University

¹¹. Hick, John(1990)Philosophy of Religion, 4th edition, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall

be achieved through non-coercive reactions and human voluntary cooperation and reactions on the stage of the universe in which God is placed. (John Hick, 1993, 76)¹²

Unlike Augustine, Hick believes that evils are non-existent and their existence in the creation world cannot be denied. He considers the non-existence of evil and on the other hand offering solutions to solve its problem to be contradictory. And believes that providing a solution to solve the problem is contradictory and believes that providing a solution to solve the problem of evil is one of the reasons for proving the existence of evil in the universe because no rational human being for a non-existent assumption. And if the solution to the problem is stated, it means that the problem already existed and the solution to the problem has already been stated.

From Hick's point of view, the existence of evil in the universe has no contradiction with the attributes of God's benevolence, wisdom and absolute justice; Because God is absolute good and nothing good is issued except good and evil cannot be attributed to God because it is contrary to divine attributes and God cannot be considered the creator of evil. On the other hand, he believes that the existence of evil is necessary to achieve charity, and their minimal existence in the world to identify and gain knowledge about charity is obvious.

From Hick's point of view, the existence of evil in the world has no contradiction with the goodness of this world, because the existence of evil in this world is an integral part of it, without which one cannot imagine this good system of the world and yet it is evil that the world of creation is called the good system.

In his view, if the world is only pure good, it can no longer be considered good, and the world full of good was created before this world, and there was no need to create this world anymore. He considers the element of human will and existence and the existence of evil as important pillars of the good system, which in dealing with the human will with evil, shows this goodness, and this good system is a combination of good and evil, whose good is maximum and evil is minimum.

3.Types of Evils

1-3Swinburne: In his works, Swinburne mentions moral, natural, and compound evil, and considers the types of evil to be limited to these three. (Swinburne, 1998, 5)¹³

1-1-3Moral Evil: Swinburne considers moral evil to be the result of human abuse of their free will. In his theology, he emphasizes the value of free will in human beings and considers

¹². Hick, John(1993)Philosophy of Religion, translated by Bahram Rad, Tehran, Al-Huda Publications

¹³. Swinburne, Richard(1998)Providence and the problem of Evil, Clarendon Press, Oxford University

free choice between good and evil as a great good. Swinburne sees the justification of moral evil in goodness and believes that without the possibility of moral evil, not only will people be deprived of the great good of choosing between good and evil, but they will at most lose the opportunity to love God. Swinburne also acknowledges that the existence of moral evil is much greater in the presence of an omnipotent, absolute, and pure good God than when there is no god, but that the same moral evil exists in the presence of an omnipotent and pure good God. It looks more like when there is no god. But the very existence of moral evil leads to a much higher purpose, and that is nothing but to provide the possibility of a special kind of complete love for God. (Ibid., 124, Solgi, 2008, 150)¹⁴

In his definition of moral evil, Swinburne says that my perception of moral evil is all the bad things that human beings actually do when they either know that what they are doing is bad and especially wrong, or that they are negligent in doing it. What they believe is good, and especially obligatory, is ignored (Swinburne, 1998, 5- 6)¹⁵

From Swinburne's point of view, assuming we are free, we certainly have free and responsible choices. Humans can change themselves, others, and the world. Humans have opportunities to provide enjoyable feelings for themselves and others, and to pursue worthwhile and rewarding activities. Good for many actors who have the choice between good and bad requires a high probability of moral evil. Therefore, actors to choose between good and evil need to have some knowledge in advance, in this sense who want a series of things that they rightly believe are evil (Pourhassan and Eskandari Damaneh, 2014, 14)¹⁶

Swinburne says, "I emphasize on the basis of voluntary defense that the natural possibility is moral evil, which is a necessary condition of abundant good, not actual evil itself. The occurrence of evil or its non-occurrence is beyond the control of God and is in the possession of man. (Swinburne, 2002, 159)¹⁷

Plantinga says: "According to Swinburne, the core of the theory of divine justice in dealing with moral evil should be "voluntary defense". But if human beings are free and responsible, the possibility of moral evil will be necessary. The creation of creatures capable of doing good deeds is to have power over human deeds as well. God cannot give human beings the

¹⁴. Solgi, Maryam (2008) A Comparative Study of the Problem of Evil from the Perspective of Suhrawardi and Swinburne, Journal of Modern Religious Thought, Fourteenth Year, No54.

¹⁵. Swinburne, Richard (1998) Providence and the problem of Evil, Clarendon Press, Oxford University

¹⁶. Pourhassan, Ghasem, Eskandari Damaneh, Hamidreza (2014) Comparison of Motahhari and Swinburne's views on the problem of evil, Philosophy of Religion (Nameh Hekmat), Year 12, Issue 2

¹⁷. Swinburne, Richard (2002) Is There a God? Translated by Mohammad Javadan, Qom, Mofid University Press

power to do evil deeds, but He prevents them from doing so from the beginning. Only by removing authority can evil be prevented” (Plantinga, 1974, 166)¹⁸

Swinburne considers moral evil to be entirely under the sphere of human will and free will, which God has no role in motivating the human will to do. In other words, Swinburne believes in the complete free will of man that with this free will he can do good and also can cause evil by abusing and crookedness. Swinburne considers the existence of moral evil in the world and its creation by man as one of the reasons for the existence of absolute free will in man, which, contrary to the previous view, does not play a role in determinism and supernatural forces.

2-1-3 Natural Evils: This type of evil is the same events in the natural world as floods, earthquakes, storms, tsunamis, etc., which may always occur in different parts of the world and their natural roots go back to nature.

In defining natural evil, Swinburne says that natural evil is all evil that humans did not intentionally create, and that their occurrence was not the result of human negligence. Natural evil includes both physical and mental suffering, and it does not differ from humans and animals; all the effects of the suffering of patients, natural disasters and unexpected events that result from human beings in their lives, are natural evils. (Swinburne, 2002, 158)¹⁹

Swinburne believes that God created natural evil to do good, and writes that I will be there to show how natural evil makes many good things possible. Natural evil is the range of good desires that perpetrators have or increases their susceptibility to self-cultivation for agents such as humans who have freedom. (Swinburne, 1998, 160)²⁰

Swinburne considers natural evil to be the opposite of moral evil, which, on the contrary, is a product of nature and human beings have no role in their creation, and human will is neutral in their creation. Of course, it should be noted that this view of Swinburne only includes a number of examples of natural evil, otherwise today with the spread of technology and human manipulation in nature, has an important role in creating natural evil and has de-balanced it.

3-1-3 Complicated Evil: Swinburne considers the greed of human beings to gain more benefits that cause damage to nature and the environment as a compound evil (Swinburne, 2002, 162-163). In fact, evil from Swinburne's point of view includes evil that is a combination

¹⁸. Plantinga, Alvin (1974) *The Nature of Suffering and the Sociological Task*

¹⁹. Swinburne, Richard (2002) *Is There a God?* Translated by Mohammad Javadan, Qom, Mofid University Press

²⁰. Swinburne, Richard (1998) *Providence and the problem of Evil*, Clarendon Press, Oxford University

of moral and natural evil, but its nature is natural and evil will is involved in its creation, such as cutting down trees that cause floods or fires or fire of forests by humans.

This approach of Swinburne is an explanation of man's misplaced interventions in nature and disrupting its normal order and routine, which, because man interferes in it and upsets it out of balance, is therefore considered evil.

2-3John Hick: Hick considers evil to be unique in both moral and natural forms. Moral evil is the result of man's evil and his evil will to create evil, and natural evil includes the natural things in the universe, such as floods and earthquakes. After explaining these two parts of evil, he says that moral evil is created by human beings. Oppressive, unjust and misguided thoughts and actions, or in other words, moral evil are those evils in which the human factor has a direct role in its emergence. But natural evil is independent of human will and human will does not play a role in its creation. (Hick, 2010, 265)²¹

Hick considers moral evil to be the result of human will caused by a human factor. Hick considers one of the factors that causes moral evil to be human selfishness. In other words, it has been the selfishness and superiority of human beings throughout history that has led to wars and killings, because as long as there is no greed for the land and capital of another land, no war has taken place and blood has not been shed for no reason. Hick considers another factor that causes moral evil to be the ignorance of a person who suffers from evil in knowing good and evil and chooses evil and is unable to distinguish between good and evil. Accepting and surrendering to fleeting desires and committing moral vices all stems from human ignorance in committing and creating evil.

Hick says there is a deep connection between moral evil and human free will, and human free will play a major role in creating moral evil. (Ibid, 263)²² When confronted with the question of why God, the Absolute Benefactor, does not prevent the creation of moral evil? He points to man's free will and states that if God prevented man from creating moral evil, then man's free will would not be valid. And man became like the creatures that God had already created, and one of the differences between man and the angels is man's free will to do good and sin.

Hick believes that if a person realizes that God, the Holy Father, is always watching over him and wants him to give up evil and walk towards him; According to this understanding, man will never commit moral evil. But since man's tint is occupied with the air and lust, and he does not consider God as he deserves; He suffers from evil and evil creation.

²¹. Hick, John (2010) *Evil and the God of Love*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan

²². *ibid*

In the case of natural evil, Hick also considers suffering as one of its symbols. John Hick considers natural evil to be one of the tools of human progress in science and technology, and believes that if it were not for natural evil, many of today's inventions, tools, and instruments that play an important role in human life would not have been created. Hick, however, believes that natural evil can sometimes cause great harm to humans and animals. But he considers the charity resulting from this evil to be much greater than its losses, and he considers the losses resulting from natural evil to be insignificant in comparison to its charity.

4. Evil Problem Solving Solutions

1-4 Swinburne: In dealing with the problem of evil, thinkers fall into two categories; Some, such as Plato, Augustine, Leibniz and many Islamic philosophers, have tried to make the problem of evil a violation of the attributes of God by recognizing the existing system and offering various solutions and arguments. On the other hand, people like J.L. Mackey and William Rowe, considering the evil as irrational, have stated it as a reason to deny the existence of God and have considered the issue of evil as a refuge for their atheism. From Plato and Augustine, he did not contrast evils with the divine attributes of benevolence, justice, and wisdom, and sought solutions to the problem of the evils.

Swinburne believes that despite evil we can achieve many good deeds and to achieve some good deeds, the existence of evil is necessary in the world. In fact, evil is necessary for achieving some good deeds, and small evil should not be preferred to great good.

Swinburne believes that evils come into being in order to achieve superior goodness. He says about how the pure God can allow evil to happen, Swinburne believes that evil comes together in order to achieve superior goodness. He talks about how the pure God can allow evil to happen, so he says: If a god who is pure good allows a bad state like E to occur, then;

1. He must have the right to allow this to happen.
2. Allowing E to occur is the only morally probable way to achieve a good state like G.
3. God does everything else through which G can be obtained.
4. The value expected in prescribing E is positive; that is, it is worth allowing the initial evil to occur. (Swinburne, 1998, 3)²³

According to Swinburne, God does not allow evil to occur in the universe except because the existence of that evil is a source of good for man and by its occurrence, provides a lot of good for man. In fact, evil does not happen by divine will and If they happen, they have so much

²³. Swinburne, Richard (1998) Providence and the problem of Evil, Clarendon Press, Oxford University

good and blessing with them that it should not be referred to as evil, but it should be considered as a lot of good from pure good.

Swinburne believes that the problem of evil is not the lack of many good states, and although God creates a lot of good, he can create more good things, for example, that death is not evil in itself, death is the end of a good state, that is, life. Death may be evil if it arrives late or causes great sorrow to others, but death itself is not evil. (Solgi, 2008, 155)²⁴ Swinburne, therefore, believes in a large number of evils, that is, bad and positive states that God can eliminate. (Swinburne, 1998, 47)²⁵

From Swinburne's point of view, beauty is not achieved in detail. When we look at only one part of a painting, that part may not look beautiful to us, but when we consider the whole painting, then that we can see its true beauty and it is with a holistic view that we can realize the ultimate beauty. The same is true of music, as a note cannot be so pleasing, but when the set of notes are put together in a certain order, then it can be uplifting and refreshing for us. (Ibid 49)²⁶ From Swinburne's point of view, the universe is also mixed with good and evil, and without the existence of evil, this world will not have its supreme beauty, and the existence of evil is necessary for the good system of this world.

Another of Swinburne's solutions to the problem of evil is to create goodness and compassion for evil. One might say that if sympathy is desirable in a situation of suffering, then it is better than a situation in which there is no pain at all. But Swinburne believes that a world with such suffering and such feeling is at least as good as a world without suffering and without foundation and emotion, because it is good for us to have deep concern for others. Man can not worry about the condition of others unless something bad happens or is probably bad, if things are always good for humans, there will be no opportunity for deep worry. (Yazdani, 2014, 152)²⁷

The worst evil must be defeated with the highest goodness. Only through the goodness of God can the terrible evil be overcome. They are equally disproportionate to human nature, sharing in the terrible evil and living close to loving God. Because closeness to God thus transcends relationships with any creature, entering into man's personal relationship with God gives meaningful constructive value and mean to horrific suffering. This result is consistent

²⁴. Solgi, Maryam (2008) A Comparative Study of the Problem of Evil from the Perspective of Suhrawardi and Swinburne, *Journal of Modern Religious Thought*, Fourteenth Year, No54.

²⁵. Swinburne, Richard (1998) *Providence and the problem of Evil*, Clarendon Press, Oxford University

²⁶. *ibid*

²⁷. Yazdani, Abbas (2014) A Critique of Swinburne's Theological Theory of Divine Justice in the Problem of Evil, *Collection of Islamic Philosophy and Theology*, Forty-sixth Year, No. 2

with this Christian intuition that [although] the forces of darkness are stronger than man, they do not tolerate the goodness that God bestows on man. (Warberton, 2010, 230)²⁸

In his works, Swinburne has also offered a solution to the problem of moral evil. Swinburne argues that in order for human beings to cause or prevent moral evil, it is necessary for them to acquire knowledge. And if human beings are to acquire knowledge, natural evils must necessarily occur because certain knowledge of what will happen in the future can only be obtained by inferring from examples that occurred in the past. If human beings seek to create a situation through their actions or ignorance that causes or avoids evil consequences in the long run, then they must know the consequences of their actions, To acquire knowledge, and the most certain knowledge can be obtained from the past history of man (ibid. 154).

According to Swinburne, by acquiring knowledge about moral evil, we can prevent them from committing subconsciously without being aware of the evil of these acts. Swinburne believes that acquiring knowledge is a fundamental way to prevent moral evil.

2-4 John Hick: Hick believes that although in appearance it is possible that the existence of evil is incompatible with the existence of Almighty God and His attributes, or that it challenges the goodness of the system of existence, but when we realize the truth of evil, not only does it contradict existence. We do not see God and the good system, but rather we realize the existence of God and understand the goodness of this world. He has stated these solutions in order to solve the evil problem;

1-2-4 Evil is Necessary for Charity: One of the solutions to the problem of evil, which has been expressed by many religious thinkers, is that it is necessary to understand charity. Based on this solution, we sometimes realize the goodness of some phenomena through evil, and by realizing them, we try to protect and fortify them as much as possible. For example, disease is a kind of evil by which we realize the importance and value of health or hunger that makes us realize the blessings of satiety.

Many charities are obtained for us by evil. In other words, some evils are the prelude to the acquisition of charities, and it is with the occurrence of that evil that we attain or notice the charities, and we strive more seriously to preserve those charities. For example, we do not realize the importance of health until there is no disease, or we do not realize the importance of security and tranquility until it threatens our danger and insecurity; So, although evils may seem harmful in appearance, they will either turn us to charity to try to pay more attention to them or lead us to newer charities. Mining a mine blast may kill a number of nearby animals

²⁸. Warberton, Nigel (2010) *The Alphabet of Philosophy*, translated by Massoud Olya, Tehran, Ghoghnos Publications

and insects, such as ants, but it will eventually lead to a mine of reserves that can meet the needs of many people.

Taliafro says that by experiencing evil, we come to understand the nature of good and appreciate it fully. Good without evil is neither known nor its value will be known. This approach can also be called the theory of divine justice of the great good. By believing in this theory, theists believe in the all-encompassing dimensions of the universe, which they believe are truly good; They cling to it, in addition to arguing that these good deeds are either a condition for the existence of some evil people or the realization of these good deeds requires some evil people. (Taliafro, 2003, 500)²⁹

Hick believes that with a superficial view we should not consider every seemingly evil thing to be harmful to us, because in essence it may be all good for us and we may be unaware of its nature. The same trend continues in the universe, and natural phenomena, although seemingly harmful to nature and to ourselves, but the benefits of that natural evil far outweigh the harms to us humans and nature itself.

Hick believes that the existence of evil is necessary for the acquisition of charity, and one of the areas in which evil causes the acquisition of good is that evil cultivates the spirit and spirituality of individuals and as a result elevates them to a much higher human level. It is suffering and hardship that can find the ground of excellence for anything.

From John Hick's point of view, evil does not exist without reason because all evil people pursue a goal. He believes that God allows evil to create greater good. (Peterson, 2014, 98)³⁰

Regarding the charities caused by natural evil, Hick says that if we remove suffering from the world, human activities and efforts to alleviate suffering and natural disasters, and on the other hand, learning techniques and skills and creating and spreading civilization and cultures according to the principles of rules, they will lose their orientation, cooperation and mutual support. In this case, the human race will have harmless and innocent people and airs, but ineffective and unmotivated, human beings without identity and personality, devoid of dignity and greatness, and having human responsibility and policy, in a dreamy, pleasant world., Without challenge, quiet. (Hick, 2007, 307)³¹

Therefore, from Hick's point of view, the existence of evil is a necessary thing in order to know and acquire charity.

²⁹. Taliafro, Charles (2003) *Philosophy of Religion in the Twentieth Century*, translated by Insha Allah Rahmati, Tehran, Suhrawardi Research and Publishing Center

³⁰. Patterson, Michael (2014) *God and Evil*, translated by Rostam Shah Mohammadi, Semnan, Semnan University

³¹. Hick, John (2007) *Philips on God and Evil*, Religious Studies, Cambridge University

2-2-4Epistemological Distance: In order to explain and solve the problem of moral evil, Hick uses a solution called epistemological distance, which links the creation of moral evil by man to his distance from God, who will be less able because he is far from God, who is absolute good. If he gains good, he will inevitably suffer evil. In defining the epistemological distance, Hick says that the epistemic distance refers to the distance that exists between God and provides man with the possibility of freedom and independence from God. (Ibid 281).

Hick believes that the starting point of man's epistemological distance from God is when God blew his spirit into man and turned away from God, widening the gap by immersing himself in the concerns of material and worldly life. And this epistemological distance causes man to commit sin because man is far from God; That is, it is far from good and all that is good, and as a result, it suffers from evil.

Hick puts man at an epistemological distance from God. The result of this effective tool in maintaining man's epistemological distance from God is the emergence of the intelligent man as the axis of creation. For this reason, man's spiritual position in the epistemological distance from God forces him to organize his life apart from God and to place himself at the center of competition with his peers. This central self naturally appears in the developmental nature of individuals and is considered a moral evil that one finds in oneself. (Parsa et al. 2019, 52)³²

Hick believes that this world has less color and smell than God than the world of the hereafter, and that is why God has given man will and authority, and because man does not follow the divine commands as much as he should, and his will used in inappropriate matters; It causes him to turn away from God and as a result create evil. Hick has used this strategy to justify moral evil.

3-2-4Evil is Relative: Another evil solution is to consider it relative. According to this theory, evil is relative and may be an evil phenomenon for some people and the same phenomenon may seem good to others, and we should note that relativity is the opposite of truth. Also, the conditions and situation of time indicate that the evil is relative, because in a certain period, a phenomenon may be evil for a person, and in another period and time, the same phenomenon may appear as good.

The reason why evil is relative is that if a creature is evil, it is either for itself, or for its cause, or its effect, or for others, if evil is evil for itself, it must destroy itself, and such a thing will never exist. If it is evil for its cause, then it will not be the same with it, and this is contrary to the nature of cause and effect. If it is evil for its effect, he will repel it, and this is contrary to

³². Parsa, Alireza et al. (2019) Solving the Logical Problem of Evil from the Perspective of Shahid Motahhari and John Hick, Hekmat Sadraei Quarterly, Year 7, Issue 2

the premise; Therefore, the evil of an object for its non-self is its cause and effect. (Javadi Amoli, 1993, Vol2, 157)³³

Evils are of two kinds: evils that are non-existent affairs and evils that are existential affairs and are bad because they are the source of a series of non-existent affairs. Evils that are non-existent, such as ignorance, helplessness, poverty, etc., are real but non-existent attributes, but existential evils are bad because they are the source of non-existent things, such as floods, earthquakes, stings, and germs, which are undoubtedly relative badness. (Sultan al-Qara'i et al, 2012, 97)³⁴

John Hick emphasizes that evils are relative, and in contrast to each other, accepting a description of being worse. He explains that even if God eliminates all the evils that we think are the worst, because of the relative nature of the evils, any evil that remains will accept the same prominent title. (Hosseini et al. 2017, 57)³⁵

4-2-4 Evil is Compensated in the Other World: This world, with its limitations, cannot be fully accountable for the establishment of justice among human beings, and on the other hand, to please the pious and punish the transgressors. Some human beings from the beginning of life to the end of life are always in sufferings and hardships that are incomprehensible to many others, and if their hardships are not answered with a proper reward in this world; This does not mean that they will be deprived of the administration of true justice, but that the limitations of the present world prevent the full administration of justice and God will achieve true justice in the hereafter, and although aspects of it will take place in this world, if a person in this world always faces problems and hardships such as poverty, slavery, suffering and similar bitterness, He is struggling and has not yet achieved his right; according to religious propositions, God will answer and reward his hardships in the hereafter. Because many evils are the punishment of deeds, and on the other hand, God will punish other people who oppress others.

In response to the question of endless suffering, Hick points to their mysterious nature and states that behind this evil is so great that this world does not have the capacity to bestow it on man, and that there must be a world separate from material features. This is the world so that it can be accountable to man for receiving great good. And this great good is in exchange for the sufferings and hardships of man in this worldly life, in which the conditions for

³³. Javadi Amoli, Abdullah (1993) Rahiq Makhtoum, Tehran, Esra Publishing Center

³⁴. Sultan Al-Qaraei.Kh et al (2012) A Study and Comparison of Evil from the Perspective of Augustine and Ibn Sina, Journal of Philosophical Research, University of Tabriz, Year 5, Issue 9

³⁵. Hosseini.Z et al(2017) The Problem of Evil from the Viewpoint of John Hick, Islamic Studies of Philosophy and Theology, Forty-Eighth Year, No. 96

receiving this goodness are not possible for man in this world, and God will benefit man in this world in the hereafter.

Hick believes that every hardship that man has endured in this worldly life; In the hereafter, it will be answered with a great reward, and no hardship will befall man in this world. Unless he shares in the final plan of God, and all this will happen if we believe in the pure and absolute goodness of God and His omnipotent will (Hick, 1989, 388)³⁶

5. Evaluation and Conclusion

The issue of evil is one of the important issues that has been the subject of discussion and research by various thinkers since it has been expressed in contradiction with various interpretations and evidences in the presence of God or the adherent of His attributes and has challenged the nature of the goodness of the universe.

Some thinkers have tried to define evil as "sin" and return evil to the will of man, which causes evil in the world by not following the divine commands and following lust. Others have defined evil as "loneliness" which is considered as a limitation for possible beings because they do not have the correct knowledge and understanding of good and sin, they inevitably fall into sin and evil.

In order to solve the problem of evil, Swinburne and Hick have tried to show it to be compatible with a capable, just, and pure benevolent Creator in the world of creation. John Hick is also more influenced by Saint Irenaeus and has expressed views that contradict Christian beliefs. Swinburne considers evil to be necessary for the world of creation and their minimal existence to be necessary for the attainment of goodness. John Hick also considers evil to be non-existent and believes that evil is the source of great goodness for man.

Swinburne, like Hick, rejects some theories which he considers to be blatantly invalid; For example, the idea that the evils of the world have the aspect of punishment and are a punishment for man for his sins is unfounded in his view. the other hand, he does not believe in the fact that some people and even animals suffer in order to benefit others. He does not even believe that the presence of descending angels will disrupt the order of the universe.

From Swinburne's point of view, God undoubtedly has an important reason for tolerating some great evils, which is much more important than not creating it; therefore, the greatness of evil cannot be a comparison against God. This is where he hypothesizes the Hereafter to save theism. The important point is that one of the parts of Swinburne's point of view that Hick criticizes is the part of the great evil that has been criticized so much. According to

³⁶. Hick, John(1989)An Interpretation of Religion, London, Macmillan

Hick, Swinburne, in response to the many forms of evil, suffices to say that a world with evil, followed by some positive results such as the growth of human virtues, is at least as good as a free world from evils. There, Hick points to the mystery of the world for the unjust distribution of evils and their enormous size, and believes that this feature is essential to the world, which is the realm of the cultivation of the soul. It makes it necessary to believe in the existence of God. Another difference of opinion between Hick and Swinburne is that, unlike Hick, Swinburne accepts the existence of hell, although his acceptable hell may or may not be a place of torment. Is that man endures in this world and includes pleasures. (Khalili Noshabadi, 2016, 140 -141)³⁷

Swinburne considers evil to be a requirement of a good system and believes that it is in spite of evil that this world is called good system, and John Hick believes that the existence of evil has made this world the best possible world. John Hick resorts to reincarnation to solve the problem of extreme evil and blames the suffering of infants at birth or their disability and their physical transgression for their sins in a previous life, and this view contradicts the Christian belief that reincarnation Rejects and believes in the abode of the hereafter. Swinburne, like Augustine, does not believe in reincarnation and believes that the suffering of disabled infants or the like is ultimately answered with great goodness by God.

Both philosophers believe in the division of moral and natural evil, attributing the former to the human will and the latter to the natural world, except that Swinburne names a third type of evil called compound evil, and collectively It is attributed to the will of man and the world of creation, such as the cutting down of trees by man, which increases the likelihood of flooding, which is a natural evil. But both philosophers acknowledge that the rate of moral evil is much greater than natural evil, and the main example of moral evil is sin and man's disobedience to divine commands.

In order to solve the problem of evil, both philosophers believe that evil is very small in comparison with charity and evil is necessary to achieve charity in this world that said by these two philosophers. John Hick also mentions the way to compensate for evil and the distance of knowledge and believes that man becomes evil because of the distance of knowledge that he received from God because of committing sins.

Finally, it should be noted that Swinburne and John Hick have tried to justify the evil issue in such a way that it does not deny the good system of creation, and they have stated that it is necessary to achieve charity and acquire knowledge and virtues.

³⁷. Khalili Nooshabadi, Akram (2016) God of Love and the Problem of Evil (Description, Review and Critique of The Theological Irenaeus and the Cultivation of the Soul of John Hick), Qom, Taha Cultural Institute